



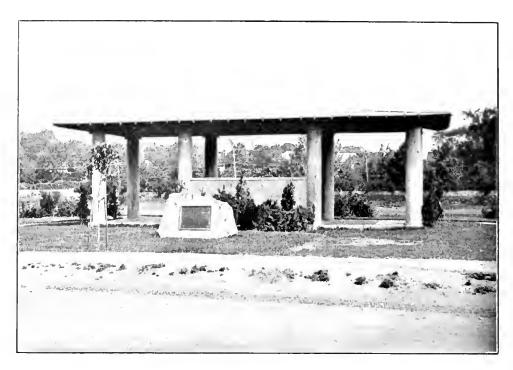
COHASSET, MASS.
PUBLISHED BY THE TOWN
1914

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LAWRENCE WHARF AND TOWN LANDING



THE MEMORIAL

Addresses

at the Unveiling of a Memorial

July 4, 1914

commemorating the

Discovery of Cohasset

in 1614 by

Captain John Smith





Cohasset, Mass.
Published by the Town
1914

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING March 9, 1914

Under Article 70 of the warrant it was

"Voted that the Town appropriate the sum of five hundred dollars for the purpose of erecting a boulder and tablet to commemorate the discovery of Cohasset in 1614 by Captain John Smith, said sum to be taken from Corporation tax."

Lawrence Wharf, the location of the memorial, was purchased by the Town for a public landing in 1907. Float stages, an ornamental shelter with seats, a drinking fountain and other facilities have been added and the locality beautified with lawns and shrubs.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS OF MR. HARRY E. MAPES. CHAIRMAN OF SELECTMEN

We are assembled here this morning for the purpose of carrying out the feature of our Fourth of July celebration, namely, the unveiling of the tablet to commemorate the discovery of Cohasset by Captain John Smith three centuries ago. I had prepared an elaborate and lengthy speech at this time, but after viewing the parade this morning, I have mixed Captain John Smith up with the fire department, Indians, pretty girls, etc., to such an extent that I think I had better leave the historical and commemorative address to other gentlemen. In bringing about this event, one of your citizens has been very instrumental. He has worked very hard to bring this about and he deserves great credit for the success, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Dr. Oliver H. Howe.

ADDRESS BY DR. OLIVER H. HOWE

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Board of Selectmen, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The occasion of this memorial recalls one of the most picturesque and interesting characters in our early colonial history, Captain John Smith. Captain Smith was born at Willoughby, Lincolnshire, England, in 1579. in life he entered military service in the Netherlands, fighting for the independence of the Dutch. Later, in Hungary and Transylvania, he fought against the Turks and was captured and sold into slavery. Making his escape, he reached England in time to join the expedition under command of Christopher Newport to establish the colony in Virginia which settled at Jamestown in 1607. As a member of this colony his explorations of Chesapeake Bay and adjacent waters were notable geographic achievements, but the genius and energy with which he obtained supplies for the starving colony and provided for its defense, saved it more than once from extinction and earned for him the election of

president of the colony in 1608. His adventures, including the incident in which his life was saved by Pocahontas, were of a most thrilling nature.

Returning to England, he was chosen, in 1614, by a company of London merchants to command an expedition to the coast of New England. They arrived in two ships upon the coast of Maine, near the island of Monhegan, hoping to engage in whaling or to discover mines of gold or copper. Failing in both these pursuits, they naturally turned to fishing and fur trading. The fur season had gone by and fishing was only moderately successful. Leaving his ships and their crews to continue the fishing, Captain Smith, with eight men in a small boat, proceeded to explore the coast southward and to make a detailed examination of all the shores and islands between the mouth of the Penobscot and Cape Cod. Since he was in a small boat, he could readily enter harbors and the mouths of rivers. Carefully observing the nature of the country, its people and products, and trading with the Indians, he wrote a detailed account of the whole, in which he mentioned the names of forty Indian villages. He also made a map of the coast, which was wonderfully accurate, considering the meagre facilities at his command.

When he reached Boston, then known to the Indians by the name "Massachusits," Captain Smith declared it to be "the paradise of all those parts, for here are many isles planted with Corne, Groves, Mulberies, salvage

gardens and good harbours."

Following a little farther southward, he writes: "We found the people in those parts very kinde, but in their fury no lesse valiant . . . and at *Quonahasit* falling out there but with one of them, he with three others crossed the Harbour in a Canow to certaine rockes whereby wee must passe, and there let flie their arrowes for our shot, till we were out of danger, yet one of them was slaine and another shot through his thigh."

Smith's mention of *Quonahasit* in the narrative occurs midway between the localities now known as Boston and Plymouth. A search of all the Indian names connected with the New England coast fails to show any other that bears any resemblance to *Quonahasit* or with which it may have been confused. These facts, taken in con-

nection with the appearance of the name "Conyhassett" in its proper place upon the Winthrop map of 1633, show that it was our Cohasset harbor into which this party of explorers came. We do not know the day, or even the month, but it was in the summer of 1614. Captain Smith was then thirty-four years of age, although his previous travels and exploits might easily have filled a long lifetime.

His account clearly states that he entered the harbor and he evidently landed, for there was time for a quarrel to occur and for the Indians to plan an ambush and reach it by crossing the harbor in a canoe.

So far as we know, these were the first white men to set foot in Cohasset. Others, notably Verazzano in 1524, Stephen Pring in 1603 and Samuel de Champlain in 1605, had sailed by this coast in their ships, and, provided weather conditions and daylight were favorable, these voyagers, and perhaps others, may have gotten glimpses of our shores from a distance. We have no knowledge, however, that any of these entered our harbor or mentioned the locality by name.

Some writers are disposed to throw doubt upon the writings of Captain Smith, regarding them as exaggerated The eminent historian, John Fiske, howand boastful. ever, after most careful research, considers these doubts unsupported, and adduces the accuracy of Smith's maps, declaring his maps of Virginia to be "a living refutation of John Smith's detractors." He instances also his truthful portraval of the life and character of the American He commends Smith's keenness of observation and his rare sagacity and leadership and reminds us that "in general, his comrades spoke of him in terms of strong admiration and devotion." The story of Pocahontas was never doubted during Smith's lifetime nor for more than two centuries afterward. Fiske regards it as "precisely in accordance with Indian usage" and further says that "without it the subsequent relations of the Indian girl with the English colony become incomprehensible."

It was, therefore, no ordinary leader who piloted his boat's crew into this harbor three hundred years ago. We might picture the scene as follows: The same surf broke in spray upon the rocks, but the shores presented a far different aspect from that with which we are familiar. The forest, massive in its continuity and its primeval growth, was broken at rare intervals by Indian cornfields or an occasional wigwam, while here and there a thin column of smoke arose from a smouldering camp fire. No craft were visible except a few canoes drawn up on a beach near the head of the cove. As the white men entered the harbor, timid groups of Indians viewed their approach with the greatest wonder. The Englishmen stepped firmly upon the shore, feeling a sovereign right, which was instinctive rather than actual. Displaying glass beads and other bright trinkets, the Indians readily exchanged for them glossy skins of beaver, fox and marten, as well as fruits and other products of their agriculture.

All went well until a sailor offered some insult or attempted some rascality. No blows were struck, but the sullen look upon the Indian's face foreboded trouble. He disappeared from the group and with three other Indians, entered a canoe and silently paddled to Hominy Point, where, concealed among the rocks, they awaited Smith's party as they sailed out of the harbor, attacking them with a shower of arrows. The white men had more formidable weapons and replied with powder and ball. The foremost Indian swayed, staggered and fell to the ground dead, while another uttered a piercing yell of pain. The conflict of races had begun. The Indian hunting grounds had been disturbed; this was the first blood shed by white men in Cohasset.

This incident, besides being the first page of our history, represents the first contact between the primeval people and civilization. It is a type of what had been going on for more than a century, all the way from Labrador to Cape Horn. We may bewail the fate of the red man who was gradually pushed out of and away from his possessions, until now his whole race is threatened with loss of identity if not extinction. We cannot condone his treatment by the enlightened races; it is a long record of deceit, injustice and cruelty. Nevertheless, it is plain that Divine Providence did not intend these spacious continents to remain for all time mere forest hunting grounds penetrated by a few slender trails and echoing only to the shrill cries of birds and the war-whoop of the

Indian. Barbarism was to be replaced by civilization. The treasures of the earth were to be brought out and everything put to enlightened uses. The lesser must give place to the greater, so that the land should serve the greatest number and fulfil the highest purposes. It meant giving a whole hemisphere to civilization. Here was the greatest process of development in the history of the world.

It is fitting, therefore, that we should erect this memorial to the first event of our history in this three hundredth anniversary year. While we realize the momentous significance of what it typifies, let us remember the cost of the struggle, which meant the driving out of the red man. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to use these great resources so honestly and so wisely as to justify the dispensation secured at such a cost.

Careful search among historical sources reveals the fact that Captain John Smith was a man of whom we may well be proud. His genius, his resourcefulness under difficulties, his indomitable will, entitle him to our ad-Parkman calls him a hero. Fiske further conmiration. siders him a man essentially noble and of heroic mould. The same testimony is given by members of the starving Jamestown colony, who write as follows: "That in all his proceedings, he made justice his first guide and experience his second, ever hating baseness, sloth, pride and indignity more than any dangers; that never allowed more for himself than for his soldiers with him: that upon no danger would send them where he would not lead himself; that would never see us want what he either had, or could by any means get us; that would rather want than borrow or starve than not pay; that loved actions more than words and hated falsehood and cozenage more than death; whose adventures were our lives and whose loss, our deaths."

The treasures of our continent were sought by men of three principal nations — Spanish, French and English. Each had opportunity to display its methods, and each underwent a test of its national character in the presence of prosperity. The general result of the colonial history in North America has shown the Englishman best fitted to occupy and to govern. It was an Englishman who

entered this harbor three hundred years ago. His race was not dismayed by the hostility of the Indians. He carried back no untrue or unfavorable report of this land of promise, but wrote with such courage and enthusiasm that his early accounts published in 1616 undoubtedly bore fruit in encouraging the settlement of Plymouth, of Salem, of Boston and of our own Hingham. We may well rejoice, then, that so early in colonial history our harbor and our rocky shore bore a part, and it is proper that we should commemorate an early link in the chain of these events — events that in time have produced the greatest nation the world has ever seen.

MR. MAPES' SECOND INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

The fact that Captain John Smith discovered Cohasset being established beyond doubt, your committee considered it proper that the man who discovered John Smith should address you today. This discovery was made when writing up your town history, which undoubtedly the majority of you have in your homes, and as further remarks from me are unnecessary, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Rev. E. Victor Bigelow, of Andover, formerly of Cohasset.

ADDRESS BY REV. E. VICTOR BIGELOW, AUTHOR OF A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF COHASSET, 1898

I am very glad to be here today as your speaker, though it may be as a sort of accident. Having accidentally discovered that Captain John Smith discovered Cohasset, it is necessary for me to be here today to make good for that discovery.

It is a pleasure to observe how much Cohasset has improved since I got out of it. These people continue the good traditions of days gone by and carry forward the promise of an immeasurable future when I see these beautified estates, this pretty harbor recently dredged and studded with channel lights, these uniformed police and well-equipped firemen, I am convinced that Cohasset is in the forefront now, as it has been in the past and as we hope it always will be.

It is a mark of conscious achievement for any community to lay emphasis upon its origin. The discovery of a place can be of no concern until that place has come to mean something either to itself or to some wider area of life. On both of these counts the town of Cohasset is amply justified in emphasizing its first appearance upon the map. As a self-sustaining and competent municipality it guards the happiness of its several thousand citizens and vindicates the admiration of those men who first viewed its fair harbor three hundred years ago.

In the second place, its influence upon the larger area of life in this commonwealth and nation heaps up its ground of self respect to a measure unusual for towns of its size. That influence is impossible to identify in recent years because its life is so inextricably interwoven with that of the metropolis of Boston; but in the years gone by there were generations of sea captains and sailors who made this harbor known up and down the mackerel and cod banks of America, and who bore our flag from this port of entry into the harbors of the world. I fancy I can hear now the chopping of broad axes and the sharp echo of their calking mallets as the ancestors of our Bates, Towers, Pratts, Stoddards and other families built and launched into these waters their worthy quota of the world's commerce.

There is one contribution of this town to the political development of our nation which has fascinated me since first I found it. Our harbor lay just on the border between the Plymouth colony and the Massachusetts colony; and in the disputes that raged for many years over the ownership of the marsh hay at the mouth of the Conohasset River, these sturdy colonists settled their dispute, not by appealing to the King nor to any other authority beyond the sea, but by appointing a joint commission of the two colonies to adjust their differences. This joint commission may be fairly considered the forerunner of the later colonial commissions that settled their larger disputes, and the forerunner of our Colonial Congress that was followed by the Congress of the United States.

The interest of this occasion is also enhanced by the historical significance of the man whose discovery we are now commemorating. Captain John Smith is probably the most famous of all the men concerned in the settlement of the Atlantic coast. It has been said that no man can reach distinction who bears the name of Smith — he is doomed to be one of an innumerable and indistinguishable mass; but our work this day is to change that doom of the Smiths by giving distinction to one of them who well deserves it. I remember with what a thrill of delight I discovered eighteen years ago when writing the history of this town that Captain John Smith came into this harbor six years before our Pilgrim forefathers landed in Plymouth. adventure with Pocahontas has identified him so much with Virginia that people are usually surprised to be told that he was also the chief patron and promoter of New But such he was. In the year 1614, five years after his exasperating misfortunes in Virginia, he came with two ships for some London merchants to the Island of Monhiggan on the coast of Maine with a plan to capture whales and to seek for gold or copper mines. The whales gave them a jolly chase, but wouldn't be caught. gold and copper were also as shy that year as now; so the sailors were put to the task of catching cod and pollock for a salable cargo. But Captain Smith was not merely a fisherman, he had the instincts of an explorer and a colonist.

With eight men, therefore, he set out, leaving thirty-seven to fish the bay, while he and his picked crew in a small boat scrutinized carefully the shore for many days from Maine to Cape Cod. Twenty-five harbors he sounded, and thirty Indian settlements, averaging about one hundred savages he saw. He bartered many trinkets for eleven hundred beaver skins, one hundred martens and the same number of otter skins.

But the most valuable product of this trip was the remarkably accurate map he made of our Massachusetts Bay. It was the first good chart in existence; and what appeals to us is the fact that Cohasset harbor was on that map, emerging for the first time out of the unknown into sight of civilized men. In his description of New England he gave the name of this Indian settlement as Quonahasit and told how one of the savages angered

in a quarrel crossed the harbor in a canoe with three companions and from their ambush of rocks shot their arrows at Smith and his men. Although we have no definite date, it seems probable that this event took place in the month of July, for Smith sailed for England on the eighteenth of August. With wise forethought to perpetuate his worthy effort, Captain Smith submitted his map to Prince Charles, afterwards Charles First, King of England, but then a lad of fifteen years. He asked the Prince to replace the barbarous Indian names for their villages by more familiar English words in order that in time to come the people who might live here should know Prince Charles as their godfather.

Thus from the Penobscot River to Cape Cod the cities of England and Scotland were placed by the boyish fancies of Prince Charles. I have to congratulate you that Cohasset received for its name the greatest appellation of all. "London" was the name given to this village and "Point Murry" to the tip of the Glades. Perhaps the famous Murray, the "Good Regent of Scotland," was thus commemorated. But why should our Indian village be called "London"? Was it because there were many Indians here? Was it because Captain Smith told the Prince such a vivid story of his visit with the Quonahasits that the place was most deeply impressed upon the Prince's mind? Whatever reason or psychological cause may be assigned, we are privileged to take the big name as a compliment and we will respond this day by magnifying the name of our discoverer.

About two generations ago there was a spasm of historical scholarship that prided itself on smashing popular idols. The story of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas was such a romantic darling from our pioneer days that it fell victim readily to the Scholar's Inquisition. In scrutinizing Smith's various accounts, there were found earlier ones without the story of Pocahontas and several apparent discrepancies. The story itself is full of mysterious, savage incidents and it is found in company with Smith's other stories of adventure with Turks and pirates in which there are so many marvelous escapes that the reader's credulity is considerably taxed. But to turn skeptic because of marvels is no credit to scholarship.

Our own New England historian, John Fiske, has sturdily led out the forces of recovery until we can read once more without blind prejudice Captain Smith's simple accounts of his own adventures. "There is no trace of boastfulness," says Fiske, "in freedom from egotistic self consciousness, Smith's writings remind one strongly of such books as the 'Memoirs of General Grant.'"

Our here was of the common stock of English yeomen from Lincolnshire, the home of the people who came to settle this region afterwards in the year 1633 at Bare Cove, now Hingham. He was left an orphan in his early teens and soon rebelled against the humdrum life of an apprentice. His eager and irrepressible vitality pushing him into a life of adventure, he became a soldier of fortune, a knight errant, in Holland, France, Italy and Hungary. Captured by the Turks, he was sold into slavery with his head shaved and an iron collar locked upon his neck. Here he was treated worse than a dog until he turned in rage one day and killed his master, the Pasha of Nalbrits. Dressing hastily in the Turkish costume and mounting the horse of his dead persecutor, he rode sixteen days to safety among the Russians, and, there relieved of his iron collar, he returned a free man, sobered, but not broken in spirit, to the land of his birth. He was barely twentythree years of age, but had been drenched by the bloodiest experiences of a soldier on land and of a pirate on the Smith had nothing more to learn of the deviltry of his age and its violence. But his ambition found soon a new sphere.

The intrepid Captain Gosnold had just returned in 1602 from explorations of the new continent across the Atlantic and his account fascinated Smith with a new sort of enterprise. Our hero conceived the scheme of establishing a new realm to the credit of the English nation. He rose out of the class of adventurers into the higher enterprise of a colonizer. Simultaneously with certain other sturdy Englishmen, he felt the fascination of settling the strange new continent with stock that might be loyal to the King of England. The Virginia enterprise was started and Smith with his friends ardently espoused it, becoming exiled upon these savage shores to make good their purpose of carving out a new realm for the King of England.

Two terrible years at Jamestown showed the untiring energy and sagacity of Captain Smith. His genius in dealing with the strange red men of the forest, as well as his tact in controlling the unruly spirits of lawless English adventurers, made him unquestionably the founder of that colony. He was governor of Virginia at a time of greater perplexity and of more desperate problems than ever have confronted a governor of Virginia. He was not fully appreciated by the authorities in England and was returned under serious criticism. But critics or no critics, his passion to colonize was irrepressible.

The new project of settling northern Virginia was eagerly espoused, and although without means to equip his vessels, he still toiled as a promoter. He conceived and pushed the scheme of the two promoting companies for settlement of the region now called New England. The London company and the Plymouth company both were fired with ambition to exploit the new shore for gain. But Captain Smith held out no expectations of gold or silver mines. He was a sober colonizer, advocating substantial industries and not tempting those adventurers who might come to plunder the natives as Spaniards had done in Mexico and Peru for a whole century. Our hero pleaded for men and women who would settle with cattle and with seeds to stock the soil. He advocated catching and drying fish, cutting timber, quarrying useful rock, and sober farming. In dealing with the Indians, his plan was to cultivate friendly relations that a long and profitable intercourse might be developed. He surveyed and mapped the coast for settlement, and gave to it the name it bears today, New England.

It was not a misnomer for the Plymouth company to call him Admiral of New England, for his was the chart that guided the vessels of all who settled by those waters. Though Smith never commanded a ship of the twenty that were promised him when his title was conferred, his enthusiasm and guiding genius permeated the whole flood of immigration that followed the Pilgrim Fathers. During the sixteen years from the time he discovered Cohasset, Captain Smith talked and wrote incessantly throughout Old England for the settlement of New England. He printed and distributed more than seven thousand books

and maps among all people from the King down to the most insignificant toiler whom he might imbue with the scheme of building a new realm for Englishmen.

Without any schooling worthy of the name, he wrote clear and fascinating English for all to read. At a time when coarse and offensive remarks were common in print, his utterances were so pure and cleanly that no expurgating is needed. Having lived for half his career amongst violent and brutal men, he dealt with others in the fairness of a gentleman, and his respect for women was unimpeachable. His work was unprofitable to his own pocket, and it seemed to him so ineffectual that he said sadly, "It availed no more than to hew rocks with oyster shells."

But when we look back over these three hundred years and behold the great realm of English-speaking people that Captain Smith advocated so unceasingly, when we imagine what this United States might have been if Spanish and French settlements had prevailed, instead of the English, we cannot withhold our humble recognition of Captain John Smith, "Governor of Virginia and Admiral of New England," as the chief promoter and colonizer of our Atlantic seaboard. Our belated acknowledgments of Smith's significance seems to be almost a fulfillment of Smith's prophetic belief that a judgment day, a day of dome, would some day vindicate him.

When he was discouraged in his last years because he seemed to be unappreciated, he wrote the dirge with which I will close.

THE SEA MARKE

Written by Captain John Smith, 1630

Aloofe aloofe, and come no neare,
The dangers do appeare;
Which if my ruine had not beene
You had not seene:
I only lie upon this shelfe
To be a marke to all
Which on the same might fall
That none may perish but myselfe.

If in or outward you be bound
Doe not forget to sound;
Neglect of that was cause of this
To steare amisse.
The seas were calme, the wind was faire
That made me so secure,
That now I must indure
All weathers, be they foule or faire.

The Winter's cold, the Summer's heat
Alternatively beat
Upon my bruised sides; that rue
Because too true
That no releefe can ever come.
But why should I despaire?
Being promised so faire,
That there shall be a day of Dome!

UNVEILING

ADDRESS BY DR. OLIVER H. HOWE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The selection of a person to unveil this memorial involved some deliberation. It was desired to find some one connected with the Smith family, who was also a descendant of the early settlers. Such a one was found in Mr. Gilbert S. Tower, for his mother was named Smith and his father is named Tower. He thus represents the early settlers of Hingham, of which Cohasset was formerly a part.

Personally, I have a lingering fancy that Mr. Tower may have an ancestral connection with Captain Smith, for one of Smith's titles appears in some way to have descended upon him. Captain Smith, in recognition of his explorations along this coast, received the title of Admiral of New England. Mr. Tower is Commodore of the Cohasset Yacht Club and therefore in a certain sense Admiral of Cohasset. I take pleasure in introducing Mr. Tower, and will now ask him to unveil the memorial.

PRESENTATION

ADDRESS BY DR. OLIVER H. HOWE

Mr. Chairman:

I was appointed by your Board of Selectmen to choose a boulder for this memorial, select a location and have a suitable tablet prepared. I assure you that this has been a pleasant duty. I have selected a Cohasset boulder, stained and weathered by the storms and sunshine of centuries and moss-grown with age. It is untouched by the chisel and is as old as anything in Cohasset. Its merits were long ago recognized, for it was chosen to protect the front line of an old colonial homestead on King Street (the Worrick estate). It formed one side of a gateway, opening to the fields, and one end of the boulder has been worn and polished by the wheels of ox carts as they turned in and out of this gateway.

The location of the memorial, close by the harbor, may be near where Captain Smith landed and also commands an attractive view of the principal features of the harbor. The tablet, beside the title, contains a quotation from Captain Smith's Generall Historie describing the incident at *Quonahasit*, in which his quaint and original spelling has been carefully retained.

I now take pleasure in placing this memorial in your care and keeping and in that of successive boards of selectmen to be cared for and preserved for all time.

ACCEPTANCE

Address by Mr. Harry E. Mapes, Chairman of Selectmen

Doctor Howe:

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I wish to thank you for the work you have performed in bringing about the placing of this beautiful boulder and tablet on this location, and to congratulate you on your success in selecting the boulder. It seems to me you have chosen the very stone intended for the occasion, and the tablet is in appropriate form and beautiful workmanship.

I accept, on behalf of the Selectmen, this beautiful memorial which marks the discovery of Cohasset by John Smith, three hundred years ago, and take it into my care, assuring you that I will endeavor to preserve it in every way and deliver it to my successor in office.

Again congratulating you on the completion of your work, I wish to assure you of the appreciation of the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of the town of Cohasset.



(COPY OF INSCRIPTION)

TO COMMEMORATE THE DISCOVERY OF COHASSET

IN 1614 BY

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

PRESIDENT OF VIRGINIA AND ADMIRAL OF NEW ENGLAND

We found the people in those parts very kinde, but in their fury no lesse valiant,... and at QUONAHASIT falling out there but with one of them, he with three others crossed the harbour in a canow to certaine rockes whereby wee must passe, and there let flie their arrowes for our shot, till we were out of danger, yet one of them was slaine, and another shot through his thigh."

FROM HIS GENERALL HISTORIE.

ERECTED BY THE TOWN-1914



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